

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 10 1984

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Otter Tail County Courthouse

and/or common Otter Tail County Courthouse

2. Location

street & number Court Street at Junius Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Fergus Falls N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota code 22 county Otter Tail code 111

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners, County Courthouse

street & number Court St. at Junius Ave.

city, town Fergus Falls N/A vicinity of state Minnesota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Otter Tail County Courthouse - Registrar of Deeds

street & number Court St. at Junius Ave.

city, town Fergus Falls state Minnesota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Survey of Historic Resources has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Minn. Historical Society - Ft. Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

7. Description

Condition
 excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair unexposed

Check one
 unaltered
 altered

Check one
 original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Otter Tail County Courthouse is situated on a city block south of Fergus Falls' business district. The three-story light-colored brick and Bedford limestone building is in the Beaux Arts Classicism style. The first floor is of brick laid in wide horizontal bands and has double-hung sash windows arranged in slightly spaced pairs. The second and third stories have two-story, paired Ionic columns and brick pilasters. Set between these are tripartite rectangular windows, separated by floors with brick panels. Below the second floor windows and between the columns and pilasters are stone balustrades. Stone is also used for the foundation, for first floor window lintels, for belt coursing below the second floor windows, and in a dentillated cornice.

The front facade entrance consists of glass and bronze doors with transom and sidelights set in an arched opening and flanked by cast iron lamp posts. Segmented stone pilasters support a decorative architrave surmounted by a carved stone eagle. Side entries are of the same design but lack the eagle.

A flat roof with parapet wall disguises the existence of an interior dome complete with murals and stained glass. Other decoration includes otters on each doorknob, commissioned by the architects and manufactured by the Sargeant Lock Company.

In 1973 a law enforcement center was added to the rear of the courthouse. It is a simple rectangular structure of complimentary light brick.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1921-22, 1972 **Builder/Architect** Buechner & Orth, 1921

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Glenn W. Cording Assoc., 1972

The Otter Tail County Courthouse is significant as the center of county government since 1922. In addition, the courthouse is significant as one of the most prominent public structures in Otter Tail County and an excellent example of Beaux Arts architectural design. Fergus Falls became the county seat in 1872 after the decline of Otter Tail City, the county's first seat. George B. Wright and Richard J. Mendenhall, founders of Fergus Falls, donated a city block on which to build a courthouse. The county's 1881 courthouse was destroyed by a tornado in 1919, necessitating the construction of a new building. Buechner and Orth, architects in St. Paul, provided plans for the Otter Tail County courthouse similar to other of their Beaux Arts courthouses in Minnesota. Gebhard and Martinson, in A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota, describe the courthouse as, "a dry textbook version of the Beaux Arts tradition...Everything is 'correct,' including the interior murals." The 1922 structure retains its exterior and interior integrity, though painting has covered some murals. A 1972 addition to the rear of the courthouse houses the law enforcement center. It is of matching brick and does not significantly detract from the earlier structure.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Vavoulis, Beverly. "Minnesota Courthouses," p. 170-71, in The First 100 Years...The Minnesota State Bar Association, Mpls., 1983.
Slattery, Tom and Carol. "Otter Tail County - Fergus Falls." unpub. ms.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property app. 2 acres
Quadrangle name Fergus Falls, Minn.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>4</u>	<u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>5</u>	<u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>2</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>5</u>	B	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	D	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

Block 37, Original Town of Fergus Falls

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>
state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Thomas Harvey, Contract Historian

organization N/A

date 21 November 1983

street & number 1916 Drew Ave. S.

telephone (612) 920-6917

city or town Minneapolis

state Minnesota

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Russell W. Fridley

title Russell W. Fridley
State Historic Preservation Officer

date 4/6/84

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 5/10/84

for *Shelore Byers*
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 2 Page 1

REFERENCE NUMBER: 84001637

STATE: Minnesota

COUNTY: Otter Tail

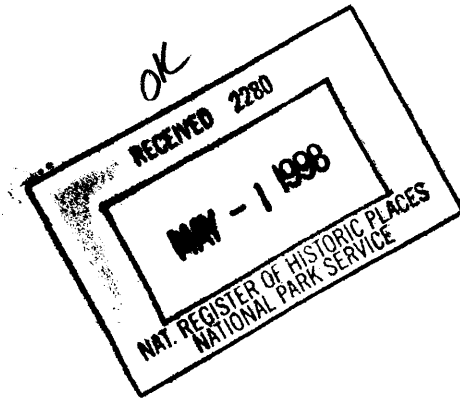
RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): Otter Tail County Courthouse

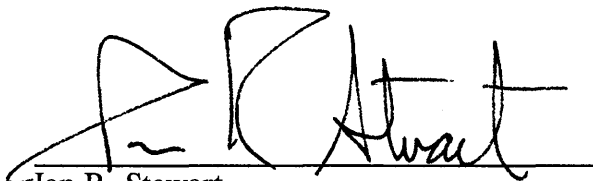
CITY/TOWNSHIP: Fergus Falls

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS: 121 W. Junius

COMMENTS: Address Correction





Ian R. Stewart
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

4/24/98
Date